

BUCKFASTLEIGH URBAN DISTRICT



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT
FOR THE YEAR 1964

MOIRA McQUAID, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., (I) D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

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BUCKFASTLEIGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year 1964.

Section A deals with statistics.

Section B refers to the general provision of health services in the area.

Section C is connected with infectious diseases.

Section D deals with the sanitary circumstances of the town. Reference is made to the treatment of water for the swimming pool and to the provisions of the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.

Section E deals with the inspection and supervision of food.

Section F deals with houses.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Chairman and to the Council for their support and encouragement, and I wish to thank all members of the staff of the Urban District, especially Mr Stokes and Mr Allen, for their kindness and help.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

Moirá McQuaid.

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN

Councillor R.C. Northcott, J.P.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Dr. Eva Ironside.

and

ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Moira McQuaid, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., (I). D.P.H.

Medical Department,

Municipal Offices,

Fore Street,

Totnes.

Tel. Totnes 2335.

CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Miss W.J. Taylor.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR (Also Surveyor)

G.T. Allen, A.R.S.H.,

Council Offices,

Town Hall.

Buckfastleigh.

Tel. Buckfastleigh 2133

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SECTION A.

STATISTICS

Area	1,365 acres.
Number of dwelling houses	925
Dwellings owned by the Council (31st March 1964)	330
Council dwellings per thousand of the population	131
Rateable value (1st April 1964)	£90,285
Estimated product of ld. rate	£360
Estimated mid-year population	2,550
Population at 1961 census	2,558

Births

Live births (21 males and 17 females).	38
Illegitimate births	4
Illegitimacy rate	10.5
Crude birth rate per 1,000 population	14.9
Corrected birth rate	19.15
Still births	1

Infant Mortality

Number of deaths in first year	Nil
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Maternal Mortality

No maternal deaths were recorded.

Deaths

Total (23 males and 17 females)	40
Crude death rate per 1,000 population	15.7
Corrected death rate	11.5

<u>Classification of Deaths</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Syphilitic disease	1	-	1
Malignant neoplasm, breast	-	2	2
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	-	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	3	2	5
Vascular lesions of nervous system	3	4	7
Coronary disease, angina	8	3	11
Hypertension with heart disease	-	1	1
Other heart disease	3	2	5
Pneumonia	1	1	2
Bronchitis	1	-	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	1	-	1
All other accidents	1	-	1
Suicide	1	1	2
Total	23	17	40

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES

1. Hospitals.

A general practitioner hospital with 15 mixed medical and surgical beds is situated in Ashburton. Other hospitals which serve the district are Newton Abbot Hospital and Torbay Hospital. There is a maternity unit at Broomborough Hospital, Totnes, to which many of the Buckfastleigh mothers are admitted for their confinement.

2. County Council Health Services.

Under the National Health Services Act 1946, the County Council provides the following services:-

Domiciliary midwives, home nurses, health visitors, supervisory care of expectant and nursing mothers and children under five, ambulance services, vaccination and immunisation procedures, home help services, and the care of persons suffering from illness or mental disorders and the aftercare of such persons.

One district nurse/midwife works in the district together with a health visitor and a nursing assistant. A child welfare clinic is held twice a month and the health visitor for the area is in attendance. The Home Help Service is provided by the County Council and the local organiser has her office at the Central Clinic, 14, Midvale Road, Paignton. A chiropody Service is provided by the County Council and has been made available for the handicapped, aged and expectant mothers. A chiropody clinic operates in Buckfastleigh for a whole day once a month.

3. Laboratory Service.

Bacteriological examinations of pathological specimens and samples of milk, water and ice cream are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories at Exeter and Plymouth. The chemical analysis of water is undertaken by public analysts at Exeter.

4. Mini-Clinic

Plans were made during 1963 in agreement with the local general practitioners for the construction of a "mini-clinic" in Bossell Road. This is to be a rural health centre. The clinic is centrally situated and easy of access being sited near the centre of the town and school. The building is being proceeded with.

5. Mass Miniature Radiography

Facilities were available at Totnes and Newton Abbot for the general public to visit the Mass Radiography Unit.

6. Mental Health

Arrangements for treatment under the Mental Health Act 1959 can be made either by the patients own doctor or by the Mental Welfare Offices - Mr Gliddon, Central Clinic, Midvale Road, Paignton - Tel. Paignton 59131.

7. Family Planning Service

A clinic is held at the Central Clinic, Midvale Road, Paignton, every first Monday of the month, 6.30 - 7.30 p.m. and every second and fourth Monday, 2 - 3.30 p.m. A clinic is also held at the Adult Education Centre, Shinnars Bridge, Dartington, on the third Tuesday afternoon of alternate months beginning in January of each year.

SECTION C.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

1. Notifiable Diseases

The only notification received by me during the year was one of pulmonary tuberculosis in a man aged 89 years and who has since died.

2. Infectious Diseases

The incidence of infectious diseases was slight. While modern preventive methods have, to a large extent, eliminated the serious infectious diseases such as smallpox and diphtheria, there is a danger inherent in this very achievement. This is that the general public may be lulled into a sense of false security and may neglect to avail itself of the protective vaccinations which have brought about the high state of immunity which the country now enjoys. There are, indeed signs that this is actually occurring in some places.

It is gratifying to report that no case of poliomyelitis has occurred. The vaccination campaign is gaining impetus and there is reason to believe that, not only in the United Kingdom, but throughout the world, poliomyelitis is beginning to lose its grip. Now that protective vaccination is so widely available it cannot be too strongly urged that it should not be neglected by adults. Age confers no immunity.

3. Smallpox Vaccination

During the year all Medical Officers of Health throughout the country were advised by the Ministry of Health that it was inadvisable to vaccinate infants under 1 year old. This is a departure from the usual procedure by which it was customary to offer this to infants of 6 weeks old and over. This still provides protection until the child enters school.

It is essential that all who work in such establishments as hospitals, laboratories and laundries should be fully protected against smallpox. This also applies to local authority staffs and ambulance personnel who may come into contact with the disease.

4. Detection and prevention of Tuberculosis

As in former years Tuberculin skin testing was carried out on all children attending primary county schools in the district and also on children aged 13 years. Thirteen-year-old children were offered - when suitable - B.C.G. vaccination and the total number of children so vaccinated in the Combined Districts was 213.

5. International Vaccination Certificates.

International certificates of vaccination were authenticated during the year as follows:-

Smallpox - 113
Cholera - 12
Typhoid - 7

These figures refer to the whole of Area No. 10 Devon County, that is Totnes Borough, Totnes Rural District, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Urban Districts.

SECTION D.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Refuse

Refuse is collected weekly and taken to the refuse tip which is a disused quarry situated well away from the town. While measures are taken to ensure nuisances do not occur at this tip, it must be realised that fully controlled tipping is not carried out in Buckfastleigh. Some measure of control over fly and rat infestation is obtained by controlled burning. This has become necessary because of the bulky volume of the refuse due to the double and treble wrapping of some goods and packages. Burning reduces this bulk and kills fly eggs and larvae and deters the scavenging of rats.

2. Sewage

The sewage works were overloaded throughout the year. In the main this was due to the infiltration of water into the sewage system. Roughly equal proportions of this infiltration came from Ashburton and Buckfastleigh.

The reconstruction of sewers and defective manholes at Buckfastleigh and extension to the sludge drying beds at the Kilbury works were completed during the year. Further extensions to the works and further measures to reduce infiltration will be needed.

3. Caravans

There are two licenced caravan sites in the district, one of which is owned by the Council. Both are well run and managed.

4. Factories

This local authority is responsible for enforcing the provisions in the Factories Act 1961 relating to sanitary conveniences and the regulations made in connection with these in all factories. The district council is also responsible for enforcing the provisions of the act dealing with cleanliness, overcrowding, temperature, ventilation and drainage of floors in all factories not using mechanical power.

Visits were made to the factories in the area by the Public Health Inspector, 21 of the 29 premises in Buckfastleigh do not use mechanical power. Conditions at all the factories were found to be satisfactory.

Part 8 of the Factories Act 1961 deals with home work and the provisions relating to this are enforced by the district council. One outworker lives in the town.

5. Swimming Pool

The swimming pool has a capacity of 59,100 gallons. The water is obtained from a leat running through the town the origin of which is an upland surface source on Dartmoor. The leat however runs through a part of the town and some mixed farming country before arriving at the pool and the water is not filtered before it fills the pool, which is open-air.

The water is chlorinated by hand and is changed at least once a week. The Council have approved in principle a scheme for the automatic chlorination of the water.

6. Rodent Control.

Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, this local authority has an obligation to ensure that, as far as is practicable, the area is kept free from rats or mice. For this purpose frequent inspections are necessary and, in addition, occupiers of land are required to give notice to the local authority whenever it comes to their knowledge that rats or mice are present on the land in substantial numbers. In the case of food premises, the notification must be made to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

During the year the Council Foreman was made Rodent Operator. Regular treatment is carried out on the refuse tips. Test baiting is carried out in the sewerage system, and the operator visits private and business premises in order to destroy pests. No charge is made by the local authority for services carried out at private dwelling houses. This concession is of considerable value as it ensures that householders are not deterred in reporting the presence of pests on account of the financial sum which would be involved in treating their premises. With the operator being on hand at all times it has been found that the number of infestations reported has increased.

7. Water

The South Devon Water Board renamed the South West Devon Water Board took over control of the water supply to the town on 1st October 1963. I am grateful to the officials of the board for their help and information. I would like especially to express my gratitude to Dr. Smales its medical officer.

Upland surface water is collected on Dartmoor and reaches the district by gravity from a large storage reservoir. The water is chlorinated, and hardened by adding soda ash. The treated water is not plumbo-solvent.

Bacteriological examinations are carried out at regular intervals at least monthly; no contamination of the water occurred during the year. The quality and quantity of the water was satisfactory throughout the year.

The fluoride content of the water supply was less than 0.1 p.p.m.

8. Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.

The bulk of the provisions of the above act came into force on August 1st 1964. The total number of premises affected is only 4 and apart from the offices, the other premises were already being inspected under other acts so that the impact was not as great as was at first anticipated.

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

1. Food Premises

There were 43 food premises operating in the district during the year and this figure includes 10 cafes, hotels and restaurants and 33 retail food shops. All were visited and found to be well-managed and clean.

2. Food Hygiene

All food handlers have an obligation to be acquainted with the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations. Unfortunately minor breaches of these regulations are only too common, especially amongst the seasonal staff. The Proprietors should keep these breaches to a minimum by repeated instructions to new staff.

3. Unsound Food

Following the Aberdeen Typhoid outbreak which is now past history several visits were paid to the food premises operating in the district to ascertain that no similar cans to those involved in the Aberdeen outbreak were on sale. This involved much extra work by your Public Health Inspector who reported to me that he found no suspect cans in the district.

The following quantities of unsound food were surrendered or condemned during the year:-

Cooked pork	28 lbs.
Corned beef	19 lbs.
Pork luncheon meat	5 lbs.
Ham	13 lbs.
Fruit salad	5 lbs.

All this food was canned.

4. Meat Inspection

Meat inspection was carried out as in previous years.

Two slaughterhouses cater for the district. The following is a table showing the meat inspected and the quantity condemned.

	Steers etc.	Calves	Sheep & lambs	Pigs	Total
No. killed	232	6	687	Nil	925
No. inspected	232	6	687	Nil	925
No. of entire carcasses condemned	1	-	-	-	1
No. carcasses of which some part was condemned	5	-	-	-	5

SECTION F.

HOUSING

1. General

Of the 925 inhabited houses in the district 330 were owned by the Council.

2. Housing Survey

This is now complete. The Public Health Inspector and myself have inspected all houses recommended for closure or demolition.

3. Housing improvement grants

Improvement grants were approved in respect of 31 properties in the town, 24 of which were Council houses.

SECTION G.

GENERAL HEALTH.

1. Housing

Following a very comprehensive housing survey, I personally visited all the properties, so dealt with, and found many of them had outlived their useful life.

APPENDIX A.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR 1964 FOR THE
URBAN DISTRICT OF BUCKFASTLEIGH IN
THE COUNTY OF DEVON

Prescribed Particulars on the Administration
of the Factories Act, 1961.

PART 1 OF THE ACT

1. Inspection for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		Occupiers prosecuted. (5)
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	
Factories in which sections 1,2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	2	4	-	-
Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	21	42	-	-
Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (including out-workers premises	6	9	-	-
Total	29	55	-	-

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were made.
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			By H.M. Insp.	To H.M. Insp.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1.)	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Reasonable temp.	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary conveniences					
a) Insufficient					
b) Unsuitable or defective.					
c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to outwork	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-

PART VIII OF THE ACT

OUTWORK

(Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	No. of outworkers in August list required by Sections 133(1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending list to the Council.	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices Served	Prosecutions
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Wearing apparel (making)	1	-	-	-	-	-

